



HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 26, 2008

Contact: Karen Cambias 713-495-4227 or 281-787-5195

Safety Message from City of Houston EMS Physician Director/Public Health Authority Dr. David E. Persse

Recent incidents in the Houston area illustrate the importance of maintaining supervision of young children at all times.

In the blink of an eye a child can drown. Among unintentional injuries, drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4 and the second cause of death for children ages 14 and under.

Uninterrupted adult supervision is the most important safety measure to protect children around water, such as pools, bathtubs, and beaches. The designated supervisor should be within an arm's reach while a child is in the water to quickly intervene in an emergency. Flotation devices are not a substitute for parental or childcare supervision or lifeguards. In large groups or family gatherings, name a designated watcher.

Enroll children in swimming lessons with a certified instructor. However, don't assume swimming lessons make your child "drown proof."

Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

Bathtubs, buckets, toilets, spas, hot tubs and other containers of water are some of the household hazards that cause residential child drowning.

The majority of bathtubs deaths occur when an adult caregiver is not present. In the time it takes to step out of the room to get a towel or answer the phone, a young child can drown. Take the child with you if you must leave. A bath seat is a bathing aid, not a safety device. Babies have slipped or climbed out of bath seats and drowned.

A five-gallon size bucket can be a hazard to young children because of its tall, straight sides. That, combined with the stability of these buckets, makes it nearly impossible for top-heavy infants and toddlers to free themselves if they fall into the bucket head first. Empty and store buckets where young children cannot reach them..

Keep the toilet lid down to prevent access to the water and consider using a toilet clip to stop young children from opening the lids. Consider placing a latch on the bathroom door out of reach of young children.

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Always secure safety covers and barriers to prevent children from gaining access to spas or hot tubs when not in use. Some non-rigid covers, such as solar covers, can allow a small child to slip in the water and the cover would appear to still be in place.

References: (used with permission) SafeKids: <http://www.usa.safekids.org> ;

May 23, 2002, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Warns: Pools Are Not the Only Drowning Danger at Home for Kids Data Show Other Hazards Cause More than 100 Residential Child Drowning Deaths Annually ,
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml02/02169.html>

*This information provides limited water-related safety precautions and should not be considered all-inclusive. For more safety information go to
<http://www.houstontx.gov/fire/>

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Print Public Service Annoucements maybe downloaded from:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/fire/news/images/nodrown%20hor%2008.jpg>

<http://www.houstontx.gov/fire/news/images/blink%20of%20an%20eye%2008.jpg>